

A TASTE FOR LEARNING

If any of our young readers wish to advance themselves along any line of endeavor there is one course open to them in which they are certain to be benefitted—become a reader of good books. Only good can result and the reader may be led to great things.

A story is told to the effect that Joseph Henry, the eminent American physicist, when a boy of 10 crawled through an air vent under a church near his home in pursuit of a pet rabbit. Once under the building his eyes caught a gleam of light some distance away in the darkness and he made his way toward it. He found the light to be coming through an opening that had been left in the floor. Crawling through this, he was surprised to find that he was in the public library, at that hour completely deserted.

The pet rabbit was at once forgotten. He began looking through the books, reading a little here and there, and at length became deeply absorbed. He was reluctant to abandon the intellectual feast even when darkness fell. That first taste of books gave him a pronounced appetite for reading so that time and again in the next few years he entered the library unconventionally through the hole in the foundation wall.

Browsing among the library's collection and selecting those works which interested him most, he acquired the taste of a true scholar and laid the foundation for a future education. Though dependent on his own efforts for support and apprenticed to a silver smith, his hours of reading in the library developed such a love for books and such a desire for more learning that he bent his efforts toward educating himself and in time became a notable scholar and authority in the field of science.

He discovered how to make the electro-magnet and in 1830 built the first electro-magnetic telegraph, a line about a mile in length. The following year he designed the first electro-magnetic engine. From 1846 to 1878 he served as head of the Smithsonian institution in Washington, D. C., his birthplace.

THE FOURTEENTH CENSUS

That the Fourteenth Decennial Census, on which the actual enumeration work will begin January 2, 1920, is to be the most important ever taken is shown by the fact that the Act of Congress providing for this census expressly increased the scope of the inquiries so as to include forestry and forest products, two subjects never covered specifically by any preceding census.

The inquiries to be made relating to population, manufactures, mines, quarries and agriculture were also extended in their scope by Congress, the keenest

interest over the forthcoming census having been shown by the members of the census committee of both the House and Senate while the law was under consideration.

The statistics gathered on mining will include all oil and gas wells. Many startling developments in this important branch of the Nation's resources are looked for by census officials. The figures gathered in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas will no doubt prove to be those most eagerly sought for, as shown by inquiries already received by the Census Bureau.

The compilation and gathering of forestry and forest products statistics will be in charge of a special force of experts. The accurate and comprehensive figures gathered concerning this vital natural resource will be much in demand, and the comparisons made with conditions existing before the war will be of great interest.

Agricultural statistics will likewise be the subject of special effort on the part of the Census Bureau, as the importance of farming is being realized by the average citizen far more than ever before.

MESSAGE GOT TWISTED

One of the methods of communicating from one officer to another in the trenches was to give the message to one of the privates and tell him to "pass the word along" the line until it reached its destination, viz., the officer at the other end. The following story will show how a serious message can be distorted on its journey from mouth to mouth:

Lieutenant A., in charge of one end of the British line, told the private in front to "pass the word along" to Lieutenant B.: "We are going to advance. Can you send us reinforcements?"

When Lieutenant B., received the message it was like this: "We are going to a dance. Can you send us three and fourpence?"

THE PEN

In ancient times brushes or pens made of reed were used for writing. Later writing was done largely with a metal stylus which was used for scratching the characters on wood coated with wax. About the fifth or sixth century quill pens were introduced and these remained the favorite instruments for writing for several hundred years. Iron pens were invented toward the 17th century but as they were made by hand they were too expensive to be generally used; the best wholesale price was about \$3 a dozen. Samuel Slocum, an American, invented a machine for making pens out of steel. Thanks to this invention, steel pens could be bought for about a cent and a half apiece by 1830. Steel pens then displaced quills.